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OFFICE OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS

August 17, 2001

Dr. Kevin Starr
State Librarian
California State Library
914 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814-4802

Dear Dr. Starr:

I am writing to ask for your support and assistance in revising the California state plan for the delivery of Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) services. As one of 1,314 depository libraries in the Nation, the California State Library plays an important role in informing the American public about our Government. In addition, as one of the 53 regional depository libraries, it has a unique leadership role in the depository library system.


Some 20 years ago, many depositories and state library agencies worked together to develop state plans for the delivery of depository services within their states or service areas. Since then, much has changed in the FDLP and in the way libraries receive and deliver information in general. From GPO's perspective, the time for state plans has come again. Among the benefits of the state plan process is the opportunity to strengthen the relationship among all of the depositories in a state or service area, to coordinate with other library and information planning initiatives, and ultimately to provide improved, cost-effective library services to the citizens.

I encourage you to support your staff's participation in the revision of the California state plan in collaboration with the appropriate stakeholders in your area, including selective depository libraries or a state Government documents group. While I hope that the regional depository libraries might lead the state planning process, I recognize that this approach may not fit every situation. In any case, a successful outcome also depends upon the broad involvement and participation of selective depositories.

Today, state plans covering 34 states and Puerto Rico are on file at GPO, but many of these plans date from the pre-electronic era. If the libraries in your state have recently revised the state plan, or have embarked on the revision process, I commend your initiative. Yet many state plans have not been reviewed and revised to reflect the changes of the electronic information era. I strongly urge you to sponsor such a review.

Thank you for your continuing support for the FDLP and your library's contributions to the public's right to know about the activities of their Government. If you have questions or concerns about these issues, or wish to discuss any aspect of the Program, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-512-0571, or by email at <fbuckley@gpo.gov>, or Mr. Gil Baldwin, Director of the Library Programs Service, at 202-512-1002, or by email at <ebaldwin@gpo.gov>.

Sincerely,


FRANCIS J. BUCKLEY, JR.
Superintendent of Documents

Attachments

cc: Coordinators of regional depository libraries

Enclosure A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

State Plans

The state plan effort began with a Resolution of the Depository Library Council to the Public Printer in April 1981. The idea was that state plans for the FDLP could provide a cost-effective means of enabling depository libraries to share the responsibility for the development of collections and provision of services. By the early 1980's, the law establishing the regionals had been in effect for nearly 20 years, and some serious collection management and space issues had developed. This was the pre-electronic era, and GPO was distributing vast amounts of paper and microfiche products, and regional collections were outgrowing their facilities. Coordination at the state level was seen as one possibility for alleviating this problem.

Early state plans relied on tools and guides such as the Instructions to Depository Libraries, Guidelines for the Depository Library System (Federal Depository Library Manual), and the Directory of Federal Depository Libraries. Not surprising for the era, they emphasized coordination in collection development, and the management and retention of physical products. Often they defined the role of the regional in that state, and set public service expectations.

Changes in the FDLP

The FDLP electronic transition follows the general trend in the Federal Government to publish and disseminate information in electronic formats. This change not only affects the types and amounts of publications distributed through the FDLP, but it also affects the relationships among FDLP libraries, and the way in which FDLP libraries make Government information available to libraries and to the American public. In the new, primarily electronic environment, GPO will continue to provide Federal depository libraries administrative support, collection development and access services (identification, evaluation, selection, authentication, organization, and cataloging), as well as systems for permanent accessibility. However, it is also essential that depository libraries work together to redefine program relationships, and to develop a support network that places initial reliance on state and regional resources.

Libraries in general, and the depository library program in particular, have changed a great deal in the last few years. The transition to the electronic Federal depository library program, what we call the E-FDLP, has caused major re-examination of the roles and responsibilities of GPO and the regional and selective depositories. Users' expectations of instant gratification put stresses upon traditional library services, and the trend toward integrated Government information services and collections continues to grow.

Enclosure B

STATE PLAN RESOURCES

Examples

Examples of recent state plans may be viewed at the Regional Federal Depository Libraries web site at <<http://www.libofmich.lib.mi.us/services/plans.html>>.

Features

As you develop your next state plan, here are some features that you might consider:

- Managing the transition from the physical to the online world of information.
- The continuing value of historic print collections.
- Electronic resource delivery, including issues of access policies for the general public, selections, service guidelines, security, and infrastructure.
- Training library staff in Government information service delivery.
- The role of the regional depository; both with the selective depositories it serves, and coordination with other regionals.
- Examination of retention policies for physical products, including substituting online versions for physical products.
- Contingency planning for service interruptions (network failures, natural disasters, etc.).
- Provision of service in a 24 by 7 world.
- Selective housing agreements or offsite storage arrangements.
- Development and support of State Internet/web services.
- Identification of potential new depositories.
- A periodic review schedule for the state plan.